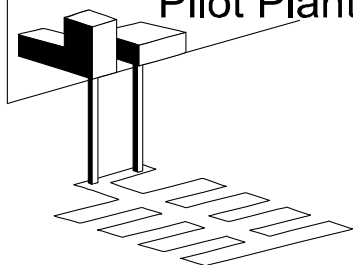


Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



Fact Sheet

DOE Proposes Modification To Hazardous Waste Facility Permit



Revisions to Current Waste Analysis Plan

Background

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has proposed a modification to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP) for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to support DOE efforts to clean up the nation's defense transuranic waste.

Currently, TRU waste generator sites are required to perform a number of verification activities prior to sending waste to WIPP. Many of these activities are used as a confirmation mechanism or double-check to confirm the accuracy of previous tests. Most confirmation tests are performed on every drum of waste that is intended to be shipped to WIPP.

To date, tests and verification processes have been performed on more than 50,000 waste containers during the 4-year operating life of WIPP. During this time, DOE has comprehensively evaluated the need for continued multiple tests and has determined that elimination of intrusive sampling and analysis is permissible and will not affect the safety of operations, human health, or the environment. The possible reduction in radiation exposure to workers is an added safety benefit.

In November 2003, Congress passed the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004, which became Public Law 108-137, when it was signed by President Bush on December 1, 2003. Section 311 of the Act states:

(a) The Secretary of Energy is directed to file a permit modification to the Waste Analysis Plan (WAP) and associated provisions contained in the Hazardous Waste Facility Permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). For purposes of determining compliance of the modifications to the WAP with the hazardous waste analysis requirements of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), or other applicable laws, waste confirmation for all waste received for storage and disposal shall be limited to (1) confirmation that the waste contains no ignitable,

corrosive, or reactive waste through the use of either radiography or visual examination of a statistically representative subpopulation of the waste; and (2) review of the Waste Stream Profile Form to verify that the waste contains no ignitable, corrosive, or reactive waste and that assigned Environmental Protection Agency hazardous waste numbers are allowed for storage and disposal by the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

(b) Compliance with the disposal room performance standards of the WAP shall be demonstrated exclusively by monitoring airborne volatile organic compounds in underground disposal rooms in which waste has been emplaced until panel closure.

***What is
Proposed?***

DOE submitted this Class 3 permit modification request to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) on January 12, 2004, pursuant to this statutory requirement. In accordance with the provisions of Section 311, this modification proposes changes that would:

- Confirm that waste contains no ignitable, corrosive, or reactive waste through the use of either radiography or visual examination
- Eliminate three confirmation activities
 - Headspace gas sampling and analysis
 - Solids sampling and analysis
 - Visual examination as a quality control check on radiography
- Require generator sites to define their hazardous waste in accordance with local state requirements
- Report material parameter weights to the WIPP Waste Information System
- Ensure the absence of prohibited items
- Monitor the underground disposal rooms for volatile organic compounds, and establish predetermined action levels

Comments

Comments for the record must be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505. They also may be e-mailed to steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us or faxed to 505-428-2567. Only written comments will be accepted and must be received no later than 5 p.m. (MDT) on March 15, 2004. A copy of the permit modification may be viewed or copied at the NMED offices of Mr. Zappe. To be placed on the WIPP mailing list, contact Mr. Zappe at the address above.

For more Information

For more information about transuranic waste shipments and procedures, call the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477), or visit the WIPP home page at <http://www.wipp.ws>. Comments to the Permittees regarding this permit modification may be sent to Mr. Bobby St. John, Washington TRU Solutions LLC, P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221.